

# Miluk language

**Miluk**, also known as **Lower Coquille** from its location, is one of two Coosan languages. It shares more than half of its vocabulary with Coos proper (Hanis), though these are not always obvious, and grammatical differences cause the two languages to look quite different. Miluk started being displaced by Athabascan in the late 18th century, and many Miluk shifted to Athabascan and Hanis.

Miluk was spoken around the lower Coquille River and the South Slough of Coos Bay. The name *míluk* is the endonym, derived from a village name. The last fully fluent speaker of Miluk was Annie Miner Peterson, who died in 1939. She knew both Miluk and Hanis, and made a number of recordings.<sup>[2][3]</sup> Laura Hodgkiss Metcalf, who died in 1961, was the last functional speaker (her mother was Miluk), and was an informant to Morris Swadesh for his Penutian Vocabulary Survey.

Contents
<b>Phonology</b>
Morphology
Gender, Number, Person
Space, Time, Modality
Case
Predicates & Arguments
Obliques
Complements
Endangerment
<b>References</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>
<b>External links</b>

Miluk	
Lower Coquille	
Pronunciation	míluk
Native to	United States
Region	Oregon
Ethnicity	Miluk people
Extinct	1939, with the death of Annie Miner Peterson
Language family	Coosan <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Miluk</b></li></ul>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	iml
Linguist List	iml ( <span>http://multitree.org/codes/iml</span> )
Glottolog	milu1241 ( <span>http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/milu1241</span> ) <sup>[1]</sup>

## Phonology

The consonant inventory of Miluk can be tabulated as follows, based on Doty (2012):<sup>[4]</sup>

		Bilabial	Alveolar			Alveo-palatal	Velar		Uvular		Glottal	
			plain	sibilant	lateral		plain	labialized	plain	labialized	plain	labialized
Stop/Affricate	plain	p	t	ʈ͡ʂ	ɽ͡ɽ	t͡ʃ	k	kʷ	q	qʷ	ʔ	
	ejective	pʼ	tʼ	ʈ͡ʂʼ	ɽ͡ɽʼ	t͡ʃʼ	kʼ	kʷʷ	qʼ	qʷʷ		
Fricative	voiceless			s	ʃ	ʃ	x	xʷ	χ	χʷ	h(?)	hʷ(?)
	voiced								ʁ			
Resonant	plain	m	n		l	j		w				
	glottalized	mʔ	nʔ		lʔ	jʔ		wʔ				

Stops are tenuis in syllable onsets before a vowel, and aspirated in syllable codas and before another consonant. It is not clear if [h] and [hʷ] are phonemic; they may be allophones of /x/ and /xʷ/.<sup>[4]</sup>

The vowels in Milluk are /i, u, ə, ɛ, ɑ/.

Vowel harmony occurs in Miluk, although sporadic. The most common occurrence of vowel harmony in Miluk is the harmonization of /ɛ/ in roots with /ɑ/ in suffixes.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Morphology

In Miluk, the possessive noun phrase precedes what is possessed. The possessed noun takes no article but instead is marked with the oblique [tə]. Miluk has an inclusive and exclusive distinction when it comes to the dual possessive. In the first person dual inclusive, the words receive the circumfix s=nə-, while the first person dual exclusive receives the prefix nə-.<sup>[4]</sup>

There are two articles in Miluk, kʷə and ʎə. ʎə is used with nouns that are closer to the speaker, while kʷə is used for nouns which are more distant. These articles do not reflect a gender of a noun and both articles have been found in use for the same noun in discourse.<sup>[4]</sup> Verbs have intransitive, imperfect, and perfect marker. Verbs which are intransitive take the -u suffix, while the imperfect tense takes the -ʔi suffix and the perfect tense takes the -t suffix.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Gender, Number, Person

Miluk does not have a masculine/feminine gender distinction, but it does have reflexives of an old gender system. The language reflects this old system in two instances: with a suffix that follows articles (-č) and in lexical items for male and female people throughout life.<sup>[4]</sup> The suffix -č has been seen to be optional but occurs in three instances: (i) following a feminine noun, (ii) referring to a young person, and (the most common) (iii) referring to elders.<sup>[4]</sup> The second place where Miluk holds on to an older gender system is when referring to males or females. Words for males often begin with /t/, while the female words often begin with /hu/ and /w/.<sup>[4]</sup>

Miluk has no third person arguments.<sup>[4]</sup> Presentational fronting occurs whenever a new argument is introduced.<sup>[4]</sup>

The table below shows pronominal prefixes.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	w(ə)-	s- (inc) / nə- (excl)	ɬ-
2	nə-	is-	čil-
3	∅	ič-	iɬ-

<sup>[4]</sup>

## Space, Time, Modality

There are two morphemes which can be added to a verb to mark tense. The morpheme *han* indicates the prospective tense, which describes that an event is going to occur.<sup>[4]</sup> The other morpheme that can be added to a verb is *hanʎ*, which marks the future tense. The future tense is distinguished from the prospective tense and has appeared irrealis marker a ʎ. The order in which the morphemes appear are the pronominal clitics, followed by mood, tense and then aspect.<sup>[4]</sup>

In the following examples, "han" indicates that an event is going to occur.<sup>[4]</sup>

Tsú han t'ámi tɬə də- t'im

Cu han t'aami ʎə tə- t'im

NR PRSP carry ART 3s.Pos Pack

"Now she was going to pack her load"<sup>[4]</sup>

Tsú han áyu ɡɛlts

Cu han aayu qelc

NR PRSP indeed cross

"And then she was going to cross on it indeed"<sup>[4]</sup>

## Case

Miluk has an ergative-absolutive distinction.<sup>[4]</sup>

The suffix -x denotes the ergative case in Miluk.

In the following examples, the ergative argument comes before the absolutive argument.

áyu ás-d-a t̬ə-x h́ú'mik' t̬ə də-dím sin  
indeed decorate-T-30 ART-ERG old.woman ART 3sg-POSS grandson

"Indeed the old woman decorated her grandson." <sup>[4]</sup>

Miluk allows for the opposite to occur, as we see the absolutive argument precede the ergative argument.

gasíya du galam t̬ə máqt' t̬ə-x gwɛis  
almost HAB grab ART COW ART-ERG girl

"The girl almost caught the cow."

## Predicates & Arguments

Similar to Salish languages, Miluk predicates have a tendency to be clause initial.<sup>[4]</sup> Arguments are expressed with noun phrases and often the arguments follow the verb.<sup>[4]</sup> Absolutive and ergative arguments can be interchangeable.<sup>[4]</sup>

The following example shows the ergative argument before the absolutive argument.

áyu ás-d-a t̬ə-x h́ú'mik' t̬ə də-dím sin  
indeed decorate-T-3Obj ART-ERG old.woman ART 3sg-POSS grandson

"Indeed the old woman decorated her grandson." <sup>[4]</sup>

However, in the next example, the absolutive argument precedes the ergative argument.

Tsú wɛn ilduwa {t̬ə dí h́ime} {t̬ə -x t'smíxwɛn}

Cu wen illtwa {ʌə tə- hiime} {ʌə -x c'miixwɛn}

NR thus say Art 3.sPos children Art Erg Trickster

"Then this is what the trickster told his children"

## Obliques

The morpheme t̬ə marks an oblique or possessive, which occurs throughout the Salish language family. The following two example reveals -t̬ə acting as the oblique marker.

Tsú k'wɛn wus- ú's -u t̬ə də- 'úmnatt' -əɖja

cu k'ween wus- wus -u ʌə te- umnaaʌ -əča

now news REDUP go.home Intrans.Perf Art 3s.Pos grandmother Loc

"He returned with news to his grandmother"

tsú má gɛ' yáhwi t̬ə də yɛis -əɖja

cu ma qee yahwi ʔə te yeis -əʔa

now Cont there rub Art 3s.Pos mouth loc

"And he kept rubbing it on her mouth"

## Complements

Arguments are often fronted in Miluk and uses presentational construction.<sup>[4]</sup> This is used while telling stories, to bring attention to the subject of the story.<sup>[4]</sup> The following examples are of the presentational construction, with the presented construction bolded.

**gwɛis** gus mín du kwí alam yúgwa

**kweis** kuus min tu kwi alam yugwa

girl all time Hab Est myrtle.nut gather

"There was a girl who was always picking myrtle nuts"

**Tit'sɛwəs** tsú ha dlúqws -əm

**Tic'eewəs cu** ha ʔuqws -əm

Young.girl now Rec.Pft get.up Intrs

"A girl who had just passed her first menses had just now arisen."

## Endangerment

The Miluk dialect of the Coosan language is now extinct. The last speakers were two sisters, Lolly Hotchkiss and Daisy Wasson Coddington. The two worked with a linguist in 1953 to record words from the language but the two were not fluent in adulthood, and had trouble remembering words.<sup>[2]</sup> The last fluent speaker was Annie Miner Peterson, who knew both the Miluk and Hanis dialect.<sup>[2]</sup> Annie Peterson's first language was Miluk, and in 1930, Annie Miner Peterson began working with Melville Jacobs and the two produced two volumes of texts in both dialects of Coos.<sup>[2]</sup> *Coos Narrative and Ethnographic Texts* and *Coos Myth Texts* were the two publications were published, but the two publications did not have any linguistic analysis. The books only provided English translations to the texts.<sup>[4]</sup>

## References

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## External links

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- Whereat, Patty (June 2001). "The Milluk Language - Ghaala" ([https://web.archive.org/web/20140407122130/https://ctclusi.org/sites/default/files/Milluk%20Language%20\(Secure\)-1.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20140407122130/https://ctclusi.org/sites/default/files/Milluk%20Language%20(Secure)-1.pdf)) (PDF). Archived from the original (<http://ctclusi.org/sites/default/files/Milluk%20Language%20%28Secure%29-1.pdf>) (PDF) on April 7, 2014. Retrieved March 26, 2018.
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